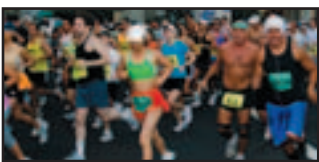




Mud Bugs  
A-3



Hungry?  
B-1



Aloha Run  
C-1

# 2/3 arrives in Iraq

## Island Warriors begin 7-month tour, 3/3 headed back to Hawaii

Cpl. Chadwick deBree

Combat Correspondent

**CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq** — The Island Warriors arrived here this week for a seven-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Upon arriving in Iraq, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, joined Regimental Combat Team 1 and received a visit from Col. Lewis A. Craparotta, RCT-1 commanding officer.

Before Craparotta spoke to the Marines and Sailors, Lt. Col. Max A. Galeai, commanding officer, 2/3, and Sgt. Maj. Patrick A. Wilkinson, battalion sergeant major, 2/3, spoke to the battalion one last time before each company took control of their respective areas of operation.

Galeai told the Island Warriors their mission in Iraq was to help transfer power of the region back to the Iraqis.

“We’re here to help them so they can eventually control their province,” Galeai told his troops. “Whether or not that happens during our seven-month watch is still to be determined, but while you’re here, you should be waking up and asking yourself ‘how can I make things better?’”

“This is a thinking battalion, this is a well trained battalion,” he continued. “You’ve worked very hard to get to this point. You have to use your minds and be committed. When we assume the responsibility for this area, you have to set the tone and set the standard, and 2/3’s standards are pretty high.”

Wilkinson echoed Galeai’s words, telling the battalion they have to do what they know is right.

He also told the veteran Island Warriors that the situation is different than the last time 2/3 deployed to Iraq.

“Your squad leaders, first sergeants and myself have already been outside the wire and it’s a whole different beast out there than the last time we were here,” Wilkinson said. “You need to be disciplined. You need to be professional, but you still need to be aggressive. You can’t get comfortable.”

He added, “Remember what you are and the reputation you have. Reputations just don’t happen like that. There’s been a whole lot of sweating, bleeding and dying to build your rep.”

Wilkinson also told the Marines that they may begin to get tired or worn down during their deployment, but that means they just have to push



Lieutenant Col. Max A. Galeai, commanding officer, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, speaks with his battalion one last time as a whole aboard Camp Fallujah, Iraq, Feb. 11. The battalion assumed control of the area this week.

themselves harder to be successful and stay vigilant.

“Your body will get used to it and your mind will get used to it,” he said. “Continue to conduct business like you have up to this point and we’re good, we’re golden.”

After Wilkinson and Galeai finished talking to their Marines and Sailors, Craparotta told the battalion about the situation in their area of operation.

“The battle space has changed for the better,” Craparotta said. “There’s been more of a reliance on the Iraqi forces. There are Iraqi forces out there that do want to take the initiative to look after their people.”

Craparotta also told the Marines not to hesitate to tell him how things are going during their missions.

“I’ll be out there checking your positions,” he said. “Tell me what’s going on and I’ll listen to you.”

He added, “You’re the guys who’re doing the work everyday and the guys I want to talk to. I’m going to count on you to be honest with me.”

The Island Warriors are taking control of their area from America’s Battalion, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1.

## Welcome back smooch



Corporal Timothy Coffman, mortarman, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, is welcomed home by his wife after returning from a seven-month deployment to Iraq in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Coffman returned on a cargo flight Feb. 13 with nine other Marines.

# Helping the homeless

## Former Marine finds refuge for Oahu’s homeless veterans

Christine Cabalo

Photojournalist

For Oahu’s homeless veterans, support to start over comes from former Marine Darryl Vincent, Hawaii director, U.S. Veterans Initiative.

Vincent helps the homeless find housing and employment at decommissioned Barber’s Point Naval Air Station in Kapolei, Hawaii. Last year, he also took over duties at the state’s Leeward Coast family shelter. The Barber’s Point branch, now called Kalaeloa, currently services 98 veterans in the Veterans In Progress program. In Hawaii since 2002, Vincent and his staff help homeless vets by addressing their immediate and long-term needs.

“Most of the homeless vets out there served during the Vietnam era,” Vincent said. “There are quite a few in their 30s and 40s who didn’t have a chance to receive the benefits veterans have today.”

At the organization’s Kalaeloa branch, veterans live in disused barracks as they look for jobs and long-term homes. Veterans also take skills classes in addition to working with counselors. The Hawaii director said he estimates 80 percent of people in the pro-



Darryl Vincent, Hawaii director, U.S. Veterans Initiative, hands Marty Coleman, lead veteran services coordinator, U.S. Veterans Initiative, insulin medication refrigerated for veterans living at the shelter aboard former Barber's Point Naval Air Station in west Oahu. The program's veterans live in the empty barracks and help maintain the grounds.

# Post offices switch to new flat-rate boxes

Cpl. Rick Nelson

Community Relations NCO

Throughout a deployment, Marines say it can be tough to keep morale and motivation high, but there’s one thing serv-

“It’ll boost the morale of troops serving overseas by the numbers.

— Lance Cpl. Marcus A. Bullock

the extra space. “The box will cost \$10.95 if it is being sent to an overseas military member or \$12.95 if it is being sent to any other domestic address,” said Sgt. Philip H. Cup-

ernell, postal clerk, Headquarters Battalion. “Ideally these new boxes could allow for a decrease in the amount of packages being sent overseas due to the larger size. Instead of sending two boxes a week for \$8.95 each, the same items could be

ing two boxes a week for \$8.95 each, the same items could be

See **PACKAGE**, A-7

See **HELPING**, A-6



— NEWS BRIEFS —

Spouses Learning Series Conference

Marine Corps Family Team Building is holding their annual conference March 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Officers' Club. "Champion Heart: New Strength for your Military Life" is a day to focus on developing the signature strengths of your family.

There will be light refreshments and reimbursement for childcare. The event is open to all active duty spouses – call your family readiness officer to sign up no later than Feb. 28.

For more information, call Jocelyn Pratt at 254-2410.

Military Saves Week

Personal financial readiness can affect military readiness by reducing stress that can distract service members from their mission. Military Saves Week addresses this issue. Leaders at all levels can support their Marines and families by fostering a culture that encourages them to save and build wealth. Commanders at all levels should engage their Marines regarding savings programs by actively promoting Military Saves Week.

Counterintelligence Looking for Marines

The Marine Corps needs intelligent, motivated talented and ambitious first-term corporals and sergeants to lateral move to the Counterintelligence/HUMINT Specialist occupational specialty.

For more information on the field, contact the CI/HUMINT Branch at 477-8447.

HR Office Temporary Hours

The Human Resources Office hours have changed due to understaffing. Assistance is now available only by appointment from 8 to 11 a.m. daily. Walk-ins will be accommodated in case of emergency only.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Shannon Tamaru at 257-1336 or e-mail shannon.tamaru@usmc.mil.

Channel 2 Survey

Combat Camera is conducting a survey to gather information about usage of the Base Commander's Channel, Channel 2. Combat Camera is using the information to improve the service in order to better serve the base community.

For more information, call Gunnery Sgt. Schellenbach at 257-1365, or to take the survey visit <http://ice.disa.mil/svy.cfm?channel2>.

Tax Center

The Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center is open. It is located in Building 279 on the second deck. The hours for the Tax Center are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

*Hawaii Marine* invites its readers to e-mail its editor at [hmeditor@hawaiimarine.com](mailto:hmeditor@hawaiimarine.com) with their comments and letters.

All submissions will be edited for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name and a telephone number.

*Hawaii Marine* also accepts news briefs containing relevant information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

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Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
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Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

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12th annual NMCRS ceremony held

Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion

Combat Correspondent

**WAIKIKI** — The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society hosted its 12th Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards Luncheon Feb. 14 here.

Although the ceremony only recognized two volunteers from both the Marine Corps Base Hawaii office and the Naval Station Pearl Harbor office, all the volunteers from the offices deserved the award.

"It's great that they're honoring the volunteers who work real hard for our Marines and Sailors," said Sgt. Maj. Daniel Fierle, base sergeant major, MCBH. "In their own way, they help contribute to the combat readiness of our troops."

The ceremony began with; Paul Belanger, director, NMCRS Pearl Harbor providing the introduction. MartyAnn Grant, director, NMCRS Kaneohe, Fierle, Navy Capt. Donald Hodge, chief of staff, Pearl Harbor, and retired Navy Rear Adm. Jan Gaudio, executive vice-president, NMCRS gave their own speeches before the ceremony started.

The ceremony flowed smoothly, with each speaker contributing to the accomplishments of the society's volunteers and showing their appreciation for their services.

"It's not the way you live your life that matters," Grant said. "It's how you live it, and [the volunteers] give so much of your time helping others. Thank you."

Among some of the volunteers attending the luncheon were representatives from the Visiting Nurse Program, quilters for the Baby Seabags and volunteers from each office.

Valerie Hobbs received the 2007 Kokua, runner-up, Award for K-Bay. She began volunteering in August, 2006, and devoted more than 257 volunteer hours to the society. She started as a receptionist and continued receiving additional roles including: chairman of hospitality, casework, and chairman of Budget for Baby, a class about finances for expectant or new parents.

Lina Jacobs received the 2007

Honors contribution of members, volunteers

Kokua award for Pearl Harbor. She started volunteering at Kings Bay in April 1999, before heading to Pearl Harbor in April 2007. During her time on island she gave more than 1,328 hours of volunteer service. She worked as a caseworker and became the chairman of caseworkers.

"Your knowledge, skills and dedication are evident in your work and leadership," Belanger said. "You have a special knack of remaining pleasant, level-headed and positive, even through the most difficult cases. Even though you are leaving Hawaii, I know the society will continue to benefit from your experience and hope you'll continue your work with the society."

Next came the Volunteer of the Year awards. Grant awarded Abby Hammond the NMCRS 2007 Volunteer of the Year award for K-Bay. Hammond joined NMCRS Kaneohe in May 2006 and devoted

more than 562 volunteer hours toward helping Marines and Sailors there. From her early career as a receptionist and later an apprentice caseworker, she became the chairman of hospitality and the chairman of the speakers' bureau.

"You go above and beyond to assist with projects for volunteer events and for the office," Grant said. "Your respect, compassion, and professionalism for our clients and toward other volunteers are commendable. The NMCRS is able to assist our military members and their families due to the dedication and commitment of volunteers like you."

Mary Masters became the NMCRS 2007 Volunteer of the Year for Pearl Harbor. She came to NMCRS Pearl Harbor in September, 2005 and devoted more than 760 hours as a volunteer. She provided her services as both a receptionist and the chairman of receptionists.



Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion  
Sergeant Maj. Daniel Fierle, base sergeant major, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, places a lei around the neck of Abby Hammond, 2007 Volunteer of the Year, during the 12th Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards Luncheon here.

Why wait? Sergeant speaks on importance of starting college while in Corps

Sgt. Macario P. Mora Jr.

Press Chief

I turned 24 this weekend, not exactly a salty dog in age or experience. But, in my short time in the Marine Corps, roughly six years, I've nearly completed my journalism degree. And recently, as I was contemplating which graduate school to apply to, I heard a young Marine boast about the education he was "conning" out of the government.

Naturally curious, I inquired about his school and how many credits he had accomplished. None. I asked what steps he had taken to begin taking courses. None. Had he gone to the Joint Education Center and taken the mandatory College 101 class? No.

So, I asked the adamant one-term Marine with two years until his EAS, when he planned on taking advantage of his educational opportunities? "I don't know," he said.

Every evening, as I drive home from class, I look through my windshield and see Marines lazily boozing on the catwalks, participating in Madden tournaments or watching the newest reality television series.

If your goal in life is to struggle through your one enlistment, get out and flip burgers to support your eventual wife and five kids then read no further.

But, if you care to succeed in

life then be proactive – go to school. Some say they'll go to college when they're out. That's fine, if you're constantly rotating in and out of deployments, but if you're not why waste the time and money?

For junior Marines, taking college courses not only gets you closer to a degree, but also gives you an alternative to Marine Corps Institute courses to help max out your educational points on your cutting score. Although, required primary military education should always be a Marine's first course of action.

And don't you think a college education would set you apart on selection boards?

Using tuition assistance to further your education while enlisted is a no-brainer. It gives you something productive to do, saves your G.I. Bill for further education and helps get you promoted.

Granted, education isn't for everyone. But, for those of you who say you want to earn a degree – do it. No excuses. You may think you have a good excuse but you don't. Even a lot of deployed Marines get the chance to take online courses.

I've been there; you always have a bit of downtime. Instead of spending hours in the Internet shed talking to Suzy, finish the e-mail to your parents and crank out that essay.

The Marine Corps and military as a whole provide every opportunity for service members to succeed through education. Yet, as with a loved one we take for granted what we now assume will always be there. But, through experience you learn it won't always. Take advantage of the occasion when presented.

"True education makes for inequality; the inequality of individuality, the inequality of success, the glorious inequality of talent, of genius; for inequality, not mediocrity, individual superiority, not standardization, is the measure of the progress of the world," – Felix E. Schelling.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



**Day** — Mostly sunny. Isolated light showers in the afternoon. South winds around 10 mph shifting to the east in the late morning and afternoon.

**Night** — Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds around 10 mph. Chance of rain 20 percent.

**High** — 82

**Low** — 62

Saturday



**Day** — Mostly sunny with isolated light showers. Highs 76 to 82. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 20 percent.

**Night** — Mostly clear. Isolated showers after midnight. Lows 61 to 66. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 20 percent.

**High** — 82

**Low** — 61

Sunday



**Day** — Partly sunny. Scattered showers in the morning...then occasional showers in the afternoon. Chance of rain 80 percent.

**Night** — Mostly cloudy with scattered showers in the evening...then partly cloudy with isolated showers after midnight.

**High** — 81

**Low** — 63





Photos by Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Hawaiian Stilts fly away as Combat Assault Company, 3rd Marine Regiment’s amphibian assault vehicle devastates the imposing pickle weed during the 27th annual ‘Mud Ops’ training at Mokapu Ponds here Wednesday. The weed is not native to the area and threatens the birds’ berthing grounds. The base environmental department uses the AAV’s to efficiently accomplish a training and environmental mission.



Doctor Diane Drigot, senior natural resource management specialist, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, relays the ‘plan of attack’ on the threatening plant life to CAC.



‘Mud Ops’ gives CAC a yearly opportunity to help limit the amount of invasive plant life.

# PRESERVATION

**Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis**  
*Combat Correspondent*

The 27th annual “Mud Ops” training was held Wednesday, at the Mokapu Ponds, to help preserve wildlife through controlled destruction. The training allows Combat Assault Company, Third Marine Regiment an opportunity to get additional training while helping endangered species from intruding plant life.

“The purpose is saving endangered birds and fighting the war of possible extinction, at the same time giving Marines an opportunity to train and maintain their combat [readiness,]” said Dr. Diane Drigot, senior resource manager specialist, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Because of the base’s location, CAC rarely gets an opportunity to take the amphibious assault vehicles out, and took full advantage of the chance to brush up on basic skills, such as getting the AAV out of heavy mud, or handling mechanical malfunctions.

“We’re helping the [environment] as much as it’s helping us,” said Lance Cpl. Mark Saldierna, mechanic, CAC. “If something breaks down, I get a chance to apply my job skills, or if they get stuck driving in the mud, we get experience in how to maneuver them out.”

The operation allows CAC to help prevent native wildlife from the ever-threatening pickle weed, an invasive plant species.

“Pickle weed is not a native plant here,” Drigot said. “And that plant takes over the habitat. That’s why we go out before the nesting season and plow through the plants – opening up the mud flats and allowing them a place to berth.”

While the endangered birds might not have appreciated the temporary intrusion, their growing numbers show a positive increase from the annual training.

“By crushing and reducing the amount of pickle weed here,” Drigot explained, “we went from about roughly 60 birds in the early eighties to roughly 160 today in that one species. It’s a great example of using combat training to help control habitats.”

Fortunately, most of the Marines don’t see it as just a chore, but a chance to go out and train, while simultaneously doing something helpful for the endangered species here.

“We don’t really get to take the AAVs and leave a lot,” said Lance Cpl. Juan Hernandez, mechanic, CAC. “It keeps us on our toes, and it’s definitely something we look forward to every year.”



Combat Assault Company plows through the intrusive plant life with their amphibious assault vehicle.

# By

# DEVASTATION

CAC controlled destruction preserves wildlife, improves combat readiness



# Nintendo Wii therapy aids wounded

## Wounded Marines heal with ‘Wiihabilitation’

**Christine Cabalo**  
*Photojournalist*

Injured service members getting into the swing of rehabilitation therapy should consider finding a Wii console.

The Nintendo gaming system is helping Wounded Warrior Company's 3rd Marine Regiment Marines recuperate from their combat injuries. Recovering Warriors are reaping therapeutic benefits during single and multiple player Wii games.

“It's a good supplement to the physical therapy people have when they're coming off an injury,” said Cpl. Roger Irving, infantryman, originally with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. “It helps you a bit, and you get motivated because of it.”

Hit by an improvised explosive device during a foot patrol, the corporal said he played Wii tennis a few times a week. Irving, injured during his Iraq deployment in January 2007, said he liked playing Wii sports games as his leg healed.

“Most of my physical therapy was general exercising and a lot of stretching,” he said. “You can do a lot of standing while you play Wii games, and it was just a fun to thing to do.”

A Honolulu apartment owners association donated the company's Wii and its games in December 2007, according to 1st Lt. Nick Perkins, officer-in-charge, Wounded Warrior Company.

Perkins said Wii games are occupational therapy for the wounded, and he encourages Marines to find off-time activities aiding their physical training.

“The Marines talk to their medical care provider,” he said. “Then they'll come up with their own [physical training] program that works around injuries or disabilities they may have. We use that program as their primary physical rehabilitation.”

The lieutenant said swinging the console's controller is only a supplement to physical therapy. Perkins said Wii gaming is a good alternative to watching television or other stationary activity during recovery. Wounded players also gain other benefits to gaming, he said.

“The physical aspect of it is minimal,” Perkins said. “It's more about reconnecting with your fellow Marines. You can play baseball or bowling together, and it's a way to relieve the stress of the day.”

Irving said he enjoyed playing against his roommate, and it was nice to have time to socially connect with others. Perkins said Wii playing, used as a supplemental therapy, aids in one area his company seeks to immediately treat: post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Marines can challenge each other in friendly match,” he said. “It allows them a small amount of normalcy which, unfortunately, their combat experiences have denied them.”

Normally, Cpl. Kyle Grous, radio operator,

Wounded Warrior Co., 3rd Marines, would play golf with his father when they were together. In April 2007, Grous had his golfing arm in a splint after breaking an elbow during his deployment.

“I had a radial head injury with my left arm,” he said. “Wii is good occupational therapy, even though I'm not quite able to do a full arm extension.”

Healing from the injury, Grous had three surgeries to fix his left arm. After the last surgery, he said he liked to play Wii games two to three times a day. The radio operator scheduled playtime in between physical therapy sessions that focused on increasing his arm strength.

“The motions you have to do to play the games

help workout your arms,” he said. “Even if it's just a little bit of motion, it's better than sitting around.”

During hospital visits, Grous said therapists tried to get him to do similar moves that would help him heal. He said playing Wii golf was fun, especially since he didn't have the arm strength at that moment to swing a real golf cub. Both Grous and Irving said they hoped Wii game developers continued producing programs that relax muscles and minds.

“A lot of games Nintendo already makes require player movement,” Irving said. “They have a whole variety available, and it's fun physical therapy to see how many points you can score.”



Christine Cabalo

**Corporal Kyle Grous, radio operator, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, (left) keeps an eye on his opponent. Corporal Ryan Irving, infantryman, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, coaches him. Both Marines left their unit and joined Wounded Warrior Company, 3rd Marine Regiment after sustaining injuries.**

## Two weeks left to participate in COLA survey

**Press Release**  
*U.S. Pacific Command*

**CAMP SMITH, Hawaii** — With two weeks to go, more than 8,000 military personnel and families stationed in Hawaii have completed online living-pattern surveys, according to Mae Ooka, quality-of-life program analyst, U.S. Pacific Command.

Military personnel in Hawaii have an opportunity to directly affect part of their paychecks this year by taking part in the survey, said Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Command.

The survey affects the cost of living allowance that military personnel stationed in Hawaii receive each month.

The final result of the survey could be an increase, decrease, or no change to the COLA paid each month to military personnel, said Tom.

Tom and Stephen Westbrook, director of the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee for Military Personnel Policy, spoke to 50 senior enlisted and officers from all branches

during an information session to kick off the COLA online survey on Ford Island last month.

COLA is an allowance designed to compensate members for the difference between the costs of goods and services in the continental United States and the same goods and services in an overseas area, which includes Alaska and Hawaii.

The living-pattern survey collects information about locations where military families shop and dine, both on and off base. The results of this survey are used to form the retail price schedule, which takes place in March this year.

During the RPS, Hawaii allowances survey teams conduct a market-basket survey for prices of 120 goods and services at on-base commissaries and exchanges and the top three off-base locations identified from the living-pattern survey. The market-basket data is then analyzed for each overseas location.

Other data such as income, number of command-sponsored family members, and the percentage of income military families spend on COLA-related items is also factored into the amount service members receive in COLA.

The living-pattern survey is only conducted every three years and is the basis for COLA amounts received by service members.

Therefore, maximum participation in the survey is critical, said Westbrook.

Currently there are approximately 45,000 military personnel stationed throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

In 2005, approximately 11,000 participants took the survey, said Westbrook.

This year's goal is to have maximum survey participation by all uniformed military, said Tom. This includes all Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Services, and Hawaii National Army and Air Guard personnel who have been assigned to Hawaii for at least three months.

But members in uniform are not the only ones urged to take the survey.

“We really want the spouses who do the shopping (for a military family) to participate in the survey,” said Westbrook.

A link to the survey is active now through Feb. 29 on the U.S. Pacific Command Web site at <http://www.pacom.mil>.

Moto Photo



Cpl. Seth Maggard

**Iraqi Army soldiers salute Mayor Hikmar Najris Al-Gaood and other distinguished guests during a transfer of authority ceremony in Hit, Iraq, Feb. 14. Marines with Regimental Combat Team 5 are transferring authority of the city to Iraqi Security Forces. Regimental Combat Team 5 is currently deployed to Anbar province in support of the Global War on Terrorism.**



# MOTO VP-47 morale remains sky-high in Iraq

**Navy Lt. Aaron Roberts**  
*VP-47 Public Affairs*

**TALLIL, Iraq** — In spite of being separated from friends, family and Hawaiian weather, morale here remains high among service members.

Especially among the Sailors of Patrol Squadron 47 and Consolidated Maintenance Organization 2, Maintenance Detachment Team Alpha, forward deployed here in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

To help keep the aviators’ and maintainers’ morale sky high, the command here sponsors activities beneficial to their professional and personal lives.

An example is the month-long Commander’s Cup competition.

The Task Group is broken up into teams comprising of the different CMO-2 maintenance shops as well as the squadron’s administration department and twelve combat air crews. The physical competition includes pushups, bench press, tug-of-war, pull-ups, basketball, soccer, dodgeball and a 2-mile relay race. The events will benefit Sailors in their upcoming fitness assessment in March.

“The Commander’s Cup is a great way to blow off steam while encouraging teamwork,” said Chief Petty Officer Neil Adams, a VP-47 flight engineer. “It is not only fun, but helps improve fitness.”

The bench press competition went at the squadron gym known as “Davy Jones Locker.” The gym has five weight machines, a complete set of free weights, punching bag, three treadmills,

three elliptical trainers, two bikes and a sound system.

The gym is only a short walk away from the hanger, so Sailors can conveniently exercise before or after work.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Melvin Asuncion helped the CMO-2 Airframes team win the bench press competition with a top weight of 355 pounds.

Sailors not competing can still help their team in other events. Several Sailors put on an entertaining performance during the karaoke contest, affectionately referred to as “Iraqi Idol.”

Navy Lieutenant Michael Choe gave an energetic falsetto performance while singing “What’s Up” by Four Non Blondes. Although he did not win, he now has the nickname “William Hung.”

“I was impressed that people had the courage to get up in front of everyone and dance and sing,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Mills, a CMO-2 maintainer. “It was more about the fun than the talent.”

The Commander’s Cup is also scored on professional development activities such as general military training courses.

Sailors have 12 courses to complete before March dealing with an array of subjects including diversity, tobacco cessation and financial management.

Teams with the highest completion rate by the end of the Commander’s Cup receive the most points.

When Sailors are not participating in the Commander’s Cup, they can unwind in the “Orion Dome” after a hard day of work. The dome is a heated and air-conditioned tent with 10 comput-

ers, chairs and tables for people to surf the Web or just relax. Other amenities include calls to families and three plasma TVs complete with two Xbox 360s and a Playstation 3. The tent has more than 200 DVDs. It’s not uncommon to see people competing in “Guitar Hero” or trying to take over the world with the game of Risk.

“The Orion Dome is a place you can go for refuge when you want a break from work or to get away from your room for a while. It is like having a small part of home with you,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Kimberly Vasquez.

Training, meetings and social events also happen in the Orion Dome. The command’s New Year’s Eve party brought everyone together to celebrate the end of 2007.

Partygoers played cards, board games and had a karaoke contest for prizes. Sailors also enjoyed pizza, snacks, soda and non-alcoholic beer. Another Orion Dome activity is team trivia night, a contest based on Jeopardy, where Sailors split into teams and compete for bragging rights. Trivia night provides friendly competition and a chance to showcase knowledge on a variety of topics ranging from architecture to anatomy.

For Sailors who want to get away from work, meet new people and relax, there are several Italian restaurants available for everyone on base. One of the restaurants, called 6 Pazzi, is also known for their Egyptian tea and patio fire pit.

“We cannot go to each other’s rooms to hang out, so my friends meet up at 6 Pazzi after work. It’s an open environment for us to have a good time, plus the tea is really good there,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Deanna Acker.

To the horror of the enlisted, the officers have come out with “Flat-top February.” To muster support for the event, working areas are covered with posters of famous people wearing the unique hairstyle. Commander Steve Deal, commanding officer, VP-47, and Executive Officer Cmdr. Dave Wright, have been seen sporting flat-tops.

“Flap-Top February is contagious here. There are only a few barbers on base that will touch the hairstyle and it takes 30 minutes to finish. I am just glad I don’t look as bad as [Navy] Lt. Matt Underwood,” commented Navy Lt. Howie Cusick, the squadron’s flight doctor.

Support from families back home also raises morale. The Family Readiness Group in Hawaii sends a monthly calendar filled with pictures and notes from loved ones.

The calendar always brings out Sailors’ emotions. Petty Officer 3rd Class Phillip Weisner recently received an ultrasound of his family’s newest addition through the calendar.

Everyone has enjoyed receiving care packages from friends, family and even kind strangers. Sailors can’t help but smile when they read cards labeled “Dear Soldier” from friendly grade school children across the country. As a token of appreciation, air crews fly flags over Iraq and mail them back to the school or organization that sent the packages.

All of these morale events have left a lasting impression on the Sailors here.

They will all finish the successful 2007-2008 deployment with new friends and lasting memories.

## Marine Civilian Development Program coming to Hawaii

**Press Release**  
*Marine Civilian Development Program*

The Marine Civilian Development Program is a program intended to help transitioning Marines — officer and enlisted, active duty and reserve — develop effective private sector skill sets using the foundation built during their service in the Marine Corps. The program is offered by a not-for-profit corporation, funded by private donations and sponsored by Randy Lerner, owner of the Cleveland Browns and General Charles C. Krulak, 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Interested Marines can find more information about the program and may apply online at the MCDP Web site, <http://www.marinecdp.org>. Interested Marines should sign up for the program as soon as they have made the decision to leave the Marine Corps to allow enough time to process the application – ideally three to six months prior to EAS. Policy guidance on how to apply for the program and approval

procedures is published via MARADMIN 054/07.

According to Laura Bass, Head, PCS Support Section at Headquarters Marine Corps, “The goal of the Program is to help Marines speed their adaptation to working in the private sector. MCDP is targeted at Marines who have honorably completed their term of service and have made the decision to return to the civilian sector. It does not compete with or replace the Marine Corps’ retention efforts or Congressionally mandated transition assistance programs.”

The program has been conducted in North Carolina and Southern California in 2006 and 2007 and is being brought to Hawaii in 2008. The date for the program is June 14-19 and it will be held at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki. MCDP is provided at no cost to the Marine Corps, participating Marines, or employers. All lodging and meals are provided by MCDP, as well as transportation and child care, when required. Courses are held in Southern

California, North Carolina, Hawaii, and Japan on a recurring basis throughout the year.

MCDP offers two courses of instruction. A six-day Gold Course for college graduates (enlisted or commissioned personnel) and a five-day Scarlet Course for high school graduates. A spouse orientation is also offered in conjunction with both courses to assist the separating Marine. These courses are taught by a combination of successful business professionals who have been in the private sector and former Marines who understand the transition a Marine makes when leaving the Corps. There are also organized social functions and discussions with recruiters and senior level business professionals so that participants can learn first hand what it takes to succeed in the private sector.

The fast-paced, focused courses teach participants how to develop the core skills and competencies necessary for success in business. Some of the topics discussed include developing an un-

derstanding of the characteristics of the private sector; developing the skills necessary to leverage your Marine Corps training and experience and applying them prudently for success in the private sector; and illustrating why adapting to the business environment is essential.

Upon successful completion of the program, Marines will be referred to MCDP’s national network of Fortune 500 companies for possible employment, but are not obligated to accept an offer of employment.

Program alumni are provided continued coaching and assistance well after the completion of the program to ensure their success in the private sector.

Feedback from participants has been uniformly positive.

“...The most effective six days of my life. The program is an absolute asset,” said Capt. Nicole Johansen, logistics officer, CLR-17

“I feel so much more confident about leading in the private sector

now that I have been through this course, and understand that my Marine Corps experiences will absolutely translate into the business environment,” said Cpl. Jeff Oien, Landing support specialist, CLB-1

“Our schedule was well planned out and our curriculum was fascinating. Every piece of information that was given to me was extremely important. The lessons were presented in exciting formats with many participation opportunities and hands-on activities. For those who are really interested in getting an advanced course on how to work in the hard charging business environment and want to learn how to seriously be successful, the Marine Civilian Development Program will deliver,” said Sgt. Taryn Bennett, Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort

For more information about the MCDP check out the MCDP Web site at <http://www.marinecdp.org> or contact Jeff Esposito at 257-7797 or [jefrey.esposito@usmc.mil](mailto:jefrey.esposito@usmc.mil).

# Preparing for takeoff



Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion  
Support personnel with Fixed Wing Test Squadron 9 prepare four FA-18E/F Superhornets here for a training flight with the 199th Fighter Squadron out of Hickam Air Force Base, Feb. 14. The naval squadron finished testing new flight, weapon and radar systems earlier this week and flew back to Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, Calif.

## HELPING, from A-1

gram also need substance abuse or mental health counseling. They’re also required to complete 40 hours of community service, usually by cleaning U.S. Vets office and housing grounds.

“The first thing we do is determine whether or not a veteran is able to go back to work,” he said. “Some people aren’t. In those cases we’ll help them figure out how to find a fixed income and affordable long-term housing.”

He said 1,000 to 1,500 veterans each year reside on Oahu’s streets and beaches without a home. Vincent manages both branches and continues outreach efforts. He also teaches weekly family counseling classes.

“He’s always a busy guy,” Zenny Agas, a fiscal specialist at U.S. Vets Waianae facility. “If he’s not going to different meetings at the state capital or meeting with state and outside homeless agencies, then he’s meeting with staff at each of the facilities.”

Agas previously worked with Vincent from 1995 to 1999 in a California branch of Habilitat, a substance abuse counseling organization. Since coming to U.S. Vets in March 2007, the fiscal spe-

cialist said Vincent’s dedication rubs off on his staff. The organization can boast of many success stories with formerly homeless vets because all of the staff works well together, she said.

“He’s a good example of not only being a good boss, but being very educated and offering guid-

ance,” Agas said. “Darryl is keen on details and, his support helps all of his staff.”

Social work wasn’t a career path Vincent said interested him when he worked as cook and administrative clerk in the Marine Corps. A visit to his mother, an Army veteran who now works in

social services, made him consider the field. After a year of running the new Waianae facility, Vincent said his organization is continually expanding to meet different family needs.

“The dynamics are a little different because at Waianae there are children and adults,” he said. “There are childcare and schooling issues, and it’s just a different set of factors to consider.”

The Kalaeloa facility is almost at capacity, and U.S. Vets is reconstructing more rooms for long-term housing. Vincent said his organization makes it a point to provide long-term housing for those on fixed incomes because of high housing prices.

Although employment rates are high, the Hawaii director said many are underemployed, or working jobs that pay less than what’s needed to live on Oahu.

Being homeless is the symptom from a lot of problems, Vincent said. The former Marine said continuing poverty is a direct cause of homelessness, and he said he hopes others realize that anyone could lose their homes under similar conditions.

“No one wants to become homeless,” Vincent said. “Everyone needs to help if we want to solve the problem.”



Christine Cabalo  
Speaking with Momi Dela Cruz, resident assistant, U.S. Veterans Initiative, Darryl Vincent goes through program responsibilities. The division director teaches classes for shelter on Tuesday nights and manages another shelter for families living on Leeward Coast beaches.



# Ammo technician named MCBH 2007 NCO of the Year

**Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion**  
*Combat Correspondent*

Each year, four non-commissioned officers go before a board here to compete for NCO of the year.

The first step in the grueling process is the NCO of the Quarter board, consisting of a physical fitness test, a service alpha uniform inspection, a basic skills test, drill movements and the board itself.

After being selected as NCOs of the Quarter, they head to a service record book board. The board looks at the number of completed Marine Corps Institute courses, any volunteer work, any off duty education, awards and professional military education.

Recently, Sgt. Anthony Thompson, ammo technician, Range Training Facility, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, was named the NCO of the Year here for 2007.

Before joining the Corps, Thompson attended Hazelwood

High School in St. Louis.

Most of his family was in the military. His father was in the Air Force and other members were in other branches, but one cousin stood out from everyone else.

“My older cousin told me about the Marines, and I said to myself, “That’s what I want to do,”” Thompson said. “I wanted to do something different than the rest of my family so a few months later I graduated from high school and joined the Corps.”

Thompson joined the Corps in July 2002 and went to boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif.

At first, Thompson didn’t know what to expect. He was open to any location or military occupational specialty. The only thing he knew for certain was he wanted to be a Marine.

“I saw how good my cousin was doing, and I wanted to experience some of the things he experienced,” Thompson said.

Thompson became an ammo technician, and his first duty sta-

“ I wouldn’t take anything back that I’ve done before though. It’s what makes me, ‘me.’ ”

— Sgt. Anthony Thompson

tion was Camp Lejeune, N.C.

He came to MCBH in January 2006, where he continued working as an ammo tech at the range. While here, he became a primary marksmanship instructor and completed several PME’s in the process.

Thompson had little time to prepare for the SRB board, but felt prepared with his command’s approval.

“I’ve been doing plenty of PME’s and volunteer work throughout last year, and if I didn’t know anything, I asked other Marines in the shop,” Thompson said. “They supported me the whole way through. I took some knowledge from every Marine up here, and it allowed me to come out on top.”

Some education Thompson received included classes in cardio pulmonary resuscitation, deployment operational medicine, two hazardous material courses and some MOS refresher courses.

“The deployment operational medicine course was probably the most difficult and beneficial course,” Thompson said. “They gave me a lot of knowledge in a short amount of time, but they also gave a lot of hands on training. They taught a lot of stuff that should be known in injury treatment.”

Thompson also volunteered in food drives, Bayfest and the Marine Corps birthday pageant in between his work schedule and his family.

“My wife was very understanding about the time we had together,” Thompson said. “I couldn’t have done it without her support.”

Although Thompson came out on top this year, he believes other years may end differently.

“There is obviously someone out there better than me,” Thompson said. “This year I just had the time to put a package in for the board. Next year it might be different.”

As for the future, Thompson plans on staying in the Corps, but is unsure of whether to stay enlisted or become an officer.

“I’m like, ‘Why not?’” Thompson said. “I put so much time and effort into the Corps, so why give it up? I love doing what I do.”

Although Thompson hasn’t experienced many of the things his cousin has, he wouldn’t go back and change anything if he had the chance.

“Both of us have done things the other wouldn’t get a chance to do,” Thompson said. “I wouldn’t take anything back that I’ve done before though. It’s what makes me, ‘me.’”

## PACKAGE, from A-1

sent to loved ones in one box for only \$10.95.”

Cuppernell, a Rochester, N.Y. native, added the change could save customers a lot of money throughout a deployment.

“That’s the goal of the new boxes, to provide more service options to customers at a reasonable price,” he added.

Angelica Vega, spouse of a Marine with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, said during their latest deployment she tried to send packages to her husband on a weekly basis.

“It got pretty expensive sending packages every week,” Vega said. “I wish they would have implemented the new flat rate boxes earlier.”

In some locations, boxes with the phrase “America Supports You,” printed on the side will be available.

“We will have these boxes on hand as soon as possible,” said Cuppernell, the self-proclaimed motivated mailman. “There is a very high demand for all flat rate boxes and we are doing our best to meet that demand, but if they aren’t at the local post office they can be ordered free of charge at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).”

He said packages to deployed service members make up a large amount of their overall business.

“This is great for the Marines deployed. Receiving mail is something all service members look forward to,” said Cuppernell, who has deployed to Iraq three times. “Any changes that can help get more items to deployed personnel at a lower cost to the families and friends back home is a great thing for all who are involved and will help raise morale and motivation among the troops.”

Lance Cpl. Marcus A. Bullock, administrative clerk, Headquarters and Service Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, said he also believes the new boxes will raise morale.

“It’ll boost the moral of troops serving overseas by the numbers,” said 20-year-old Bullock. “By such, receiving mail gives a sense of endearment for those supporting us back home. I think it’s a great idea that they’re offering packages at a low rate and they’re boosting the support logo because families and friends of supporting troops would love to send more at less.”

The new flat rate boxes will be available at post offices nationwide March 3. Customers can begin ordering them Feb. 20, at <http://www.usps.com/supplies> or by calling (800)610-8734.



# AROUND THE CORPS

## MARSOC Marines become first to earn Colombian ‘Lancero’ title

**Lance Cpl. Stephen C. Benson**  
*U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command*

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.** — During 73 days of some of the most physically arduous and mentally grueling training in all of the militaries around the world, two Marines from Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, persevered to become the first MARSOC Marines to earn the title of “Lancero.”

Captain German E. Duarte and Sgt. Roberto P. Sanchez graduated from Escuela de Lanceros Dec. 5, 2007, where the Colombian National Army and service members from friendly foreign militaries gather to endure Lancero training and develop themselves into highly-skilled warfighters.

“I would say this has been the toughest and the craziest out of all courses I have been through or heard of,” Duarte said. “Without Marine Corps training, I don’t think we would have even made it.”

According to U.S. Army Maj. Edgar J. Alvarez, Lancero instructor and exchange officer, 7th Special Forces Group, the Lancero course began Dec. 6, 1955, after members of the Colombian National Army went through U.S. Army Ranger School and used what they learned to form their own special forces school in Colombia. Today, the Escuela de Lanceros is designed to develop its students into experts in small-unit tactics and irregular warfare. More specifically, it prepares the Colombian military to combat terrorist groups who use guerilla tactics.

Duarte and Sanchez said much of the course is culture based. They learned techniques, tactics and procedures of the Colombian armed forces and gained a better understanding of Colombian culture.

According to Duarte and Sanchez, the course is broken up into several phases: adaptation/acclimatization, irregular/urban, mountain and jungle warfare, and finally, graduation week.

In the adaptation/acclimatization phase, Duarte and Sanchez acclimated to the heat and humidity and instructors led intensive physical training to prepare students for the duration of the course.

“You get used to not sleeping and eating well and beating your body down with PT,” Sanchez said. “They teach you weapons familiarization, land navigation and the Colombian [military] planning process.”

After two weeks, they moved on to irregular/urban warfare and learned close quarters battle tactics similar to those used by U.S. armed forces.

“You do patrols and hikes at a training center and you come back in the morning and immediately start planning for the next patrol. Then, you get 2 hours of sleep before going out on that patrol,” Sanchez said.

According to Duarte, the main part of the course was the last four weeks, which encompassed the mountain and jungle-warfare phases. The most difficult training evolutions fell within these weeks, including multiple hikes ranging from 8 kilometers to a 36-kilometer hike known as the Marca de la Muerte, or March of Death.

“The hikes were definitely the most difficult part of the course because the terrain is rough,

there are no breaks and you carry 60-70 pounds on your back as you go up and down mountains and through the jungle,” Duarte said. “It’s not like [Marine Corps hikes] where you go for so long, and you take a break and drink water. Over there, you get water, but on the move.”

During the jungle phase, Duarte and Sanchez spent a difficult eight days in a mock concentration camp. Students were deprived of food and subjected to various physical and mental stresses meant to break their spirits. The Marines persevered and were impressed by their fellow Colombian students.

“There is a culture of machismo,” Duarte said. “Some of the things they do you wouldn’t do in the Marine Corps or anywhere else, but they do it because they have to show they are men.”

Despite the difficulty of the final four weeks, both Duarte and Sanchez say it was their fa-

vorite part of the Lancero course. The Lancero course honed their skills both as infantrymen and as special operations advisors.

“I have done two foreign internal defense missions in Colombia,” Duarte said. “For the Colombian Army, being a Lancero is kind of like being a Ranger in the [U.S.] Army. Most of their infantry officers go there to gain knowledge and prestige.

“Marines help Marines wherever you go,” Duarte said. “It’s the same for Lanceros. When they see another Lancero, they say, ‘Hey, how can I help you?’ or ‘What can I do for you?’ They are always looking out for each other.”

Active duty Marines and Sailors interested in joining MARSOC can contact the School at (910) 451-0099/3349 (DSN 751-3349/3123) or visit us online at <http://www.marsoc.usmc.mil>.



Lance Cpl. Stephen C. Benson

Captain German E. Duarte, Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, sights in using a bow and arrow during survival training in the jungle phase of the 10-week Escuela de Lanceros. Duarte graduated from the Colombian special forces school Dec. 5.